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Occupational Employment and Wages in Columbia – May 2014

Workers in the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$19.72 in May 2014, about 13 percent below the nationwide average of \$22.71, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were higher than their respective national averages in 1 of the 22 major occupational groups. Twenty groups had significantly lower wages than their respective national averages, including computer and mathematical; construction and extraction; and management.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 5 of the 22 occupational groups, including office and administrative support; healthcare practitioners and technical; and legal. Conversely, nine groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including personal care and service; food preparation and serving related; and management. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2014

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Columbia	United States	Columbia	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Total, all occupations.....	100.0%	100.0%	\$22.71	\$19.72*	-13
Management.....	5.0	4.6*	54.08	46.32*	-14
Business and financial operations.....	5.1	5.0	34.81	27.67*	-21
Computer and mathematical.....	2.8	2.7	40.37	31.63*	-22
Architecture and engineering.....	1.8	1.6*	39.19	33.16*	-15
Life, physical, and social science.....	0.8	0.5*	33.69	27.94*	-17
Community and social services.....	1.4	1.4	21.79	19.52*	-10
Legal.....	0.8	1.2*	48.61	32.82*	-32
Education, training, and library.....	6.2	6.1	25.10	22.31*	-11
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media.....	1.3	0.9*	26.82	21.02*	-22
Healthcare practitioner and technical.....	5.8	6.6*	36.54	30.78*	-16
Healthcare support.....	2.9	3.0	13.86	12.82*	-8
Protective service.....	2.4	2.9*	21.14	16.89*	-20
Food preparation and serving related.....	9.1	8.3*	10.57	9.32*	-12
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance.....	3.2	3.0*	12.68	10.92*	-14
Personal care and service.....	3.1	2.2*	12.01	11.01*	-8
Sales and related.....	10.5	10.7	18.59	15.58*	-16
Office and administrative support.....	16.0	17.8*	17.08	16.02*	-6

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2014 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Columbia	United States	Columbia	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Farming, fishing, and forestry.....	0.3	0.2*	12.09	13.59*	12
Construction and extraction.....	3.9	3.5*	22.40	18.39*	-18
Installation, maintenance, and repair.....	3.9	4.2*	21.74	20.15*	-7
Production.....	6.6	7.0	17.06	16.88	-1
Transportation and material moving.....	6.8	6.6	16.57	15.42*	-7

⁽¹⁾ A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Columbia is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

One occupational group—office and administrative support—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Columbia had 63,240 jobs in office and administrative support, accounting for 17.8 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 16.0-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$16.02, significantly below the national wage of \$17.08.

Some of the largest detailed occupations within the office and administrative support group included customer service representatives (10,280), secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive (7,450), and general office clerks (6,600). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers, and executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants, with mean hourly wages of \$23.37 and \$22.58, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks (\$9.04) and stock clerks and order fillers (\$10.58). (Detailed occupational data for office and administrative support are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/2014/may/oes_17900.htm.)

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See [table 1](#).) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in some of the occupations within the office and administrative support group. For instance, procurement clerks were employed at 2.3 times the national rate in Columbia, and insurance claims and policy processing clerks, at 2.2 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks had a location quotient of 0.9 in Columbia, indicating that this particular occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce.

Note

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are also surveyed, but their data are not included in the national estimates. OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year. May 2014 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2014, November 2013, May 2013, November 2012, May 2012, and November 2011. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 74.3 percent based on establishments and 70.5 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 57.1 percent of total national employment. (Response rates are slightly lower for these estimates due to the federal shutdown in October 2013.) The sample in the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area included 2,754 establishments with a response rate of 70 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and 821 detailed occupations for the nation, states, metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan areas. In addition, employment and wage estimates for 94 minor groups and 458 broad occupations are available in the national data. OES data by state and metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area are available from www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcst.htm and www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm, respectively.

The May 2014 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

Area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Columbia, S.C. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Calhoun, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lexington, Richland, and Saluda Counties.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/southeast. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/2014/may/methods_statement.pdf.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 800-877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2014

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Office and Administrative Support Occupations.....	63,240	1.1	\$16.02	\$33,320
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers.....	6,130	1.7	23.37	48,610
Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service.....	340	1.2	13.43	27,930
Bill and Account Collectors.....	1,390	1.5	14.64	30,460
Billing and Posting Clerks.....	1,420	1.1	15.49	32,210
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks.....	3,630	0.9	16.80	34,950
Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks.....	350	0.8	19.36	40,270
Procurement Clerks.....	430	2.3	18.39	38,250
Tellers.....	960	0.7	12.49	25,970
Brokerage Clerks.....	140	1.0	20.57	42,780
Court, Municipal, and License Clerks.....	290	0.9	17.98	37,400
Credit Authorizers, Checkers, and Clerks.....	90	0.7	17.82	37,060
Customer Service Representatives.....	10,280	1.6	15.47	32,190
Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs.....	60	0.2	19.92	41,430
File Clerks.....	330	0.8	12.21	25,390
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks.....	710	1.1	9.04	18,800
Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan.....	570	1.1	13.57	28,230
Library Assistants, Clerical.....	290	1.1	11.82	24,590
Loan Interviewers and Clerks.....	320	0.6	16.96	35,270
New Accounts Clerks.....	90	0.7	16.18	33,660
Order Clerks.....	220	0.5	16.46	34,230
Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping.....	470	1.3	17.19	35,750
Receptionists and Information Clerks.....	2,480	1.0	12.73	26,470
Information and Record Clerks, All Other.....	370	0.8	19.16	39,840
Cargo and Freight Agents.....	60	0.3	22.28	46,340
Couriers and Messengers.....	270	1.4	11.01	22,900
Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers.....	210	0.8	14.75	30,680
Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance.....	330	0.7	20.62	42,900
Meter Readers, Utilities.....	100	1.1	17.59	36,590
Postal Service Clerks.....	110	0.6	25.06	52,130
Postal Service Mail Carriers.....	710	0.9	24.29	50,520
Postal Service Mail Sorters, Processors, and Processing Machine Operators.....	410	1.3	22.89	47,610
Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks.....	(5)	(5)	23.05	47,950
Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks.....	1,530	0.9	14.37	29,900
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers.....	4,150	0.8	10.58	22,000
Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping.....	350	1.9	10.09	20,990
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants.....	1,400	0.7	22.58	46,970
Legal Secretaries.....	790	1.4	16.56	34,450
Medical Secretaries.....	1,230	0.9	14.66	30,490
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive.....	7,450	1.3	15.10	31,410
Computer Operators.....	100	0.6	17.20	35,780
Data Entry Keyers.....	810	1.5	12.99	27,020
Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks.....	1,490	2.2	16.11	33,510
Mail Clerks and Mail Machine Operators, Except Postal Service.....	400	1.5	13.74	28,570
Office Clerks, General.....	6,600	0.9	13.00	27,050
Office Machine Operators, Except Computer.....	690	3.9	(5)	(5)
Statistical Assistants.....	110	2.8	(5)	(5)

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2014 - Continued

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other.....	150	0.2	19.84	41,270

⁽¹⁾ For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Columbia, SC, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_17900.htm.

⁽²⁾ Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

⁽³⁾ The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

⁽⁴⁾ Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a 'year-round, full-time' hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

⁽⁵⁾ Estimate not released.